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Editorials—

Old Soldiers Don't Fade Away

More and more military men are finding their way into civilian government jobs in the United States and there are some legitimate reasons why.

But is it good policy to encourage it?

One reason why retired generals and admirals are moving into government obviously is that they often are experts in their respective fields and government officials want to make use of their experience and knowledge.

President Johnson, for example, wanted a man knowledgeable in air traffic and aircraft problems to head the Federal Aeronautics Agency and selected Lt. Gen. William F. McKee, a retired Air Force officer, for the job. However, because the FAA administrator's post was specifically closed to military men by law, special congressional approval of the McKee appointment was necessary.

In examining the case, Sens. Vance Hartke, on Indiana Democrat and James Pearson, a Kansas Republican, found that there are now 41 retired generals and admirals in high positions in government. There are already 94 former military men in the "civilian" FAA, itself.

There are six generals or admirals in the State Department, including Gen. Maxwell Taylor, our ambassador to South Vietnam, and Admiral Jerauld

Wright, ambassador to Nationalist China. There are five in the national space agency and at least three in the Central Intelligence agency, including Admiral W. E. Raborn, the head of the CIA.

One estimate is that there are 30,000 ex-military men in various governmental positions throughout the country.

In addition to their experience and ability, of course, another reason why they enter government is that a career military man often can retire at an earlier age than his counterpart in civilian life with a pension which allows him to accept a second career in government service. The combined salaries and pensions of some of the top military-civilian officials range from \$27,000 to \$38,000—more than cabinet officers or congressmen receive.

Congress, we believe, should take a closer look at this trend and decide whether there is some point at which true civilian control of government might be threatened by the flow of military-trained and oriented men into key administrative posts.

The realization that the flow is as strong as it is and the warning of President Eisenhower when he left office about the dangers of a military-industrial complex domination of government should make us all a little uneasy about the present course of events.